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Calendar

For a listing of industry events and dates for the coming year, please visit:

<http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/industry-calendar>

“Growing Together” Latino Farmer Conference

The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the National Center for Appropriate Technology are hosting the Third Annual “Growing Together” Latino Farmer Conference specifically designed for Spanish speaking farmers, ranchers and members of agricultural organizations. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

November 7

November 7

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: UC-Riverside Palm Desert Center, 75080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert, CA

San Diego Farm and Nursery Expo

The San Diego Third Annual Farm and Nursery Expo will host a diverse range of exhibitors, vendors and seminar speakers. The event is free and CAC will have a booth in the Resource Center of the Expo. Register in advance. [More information available here.](#)

November 8

November 8

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Del Mar Fairgrounds located at 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd., Del Mar, CA

Ventura County Water Tour

The Ninth Annual Ventura County Water Tour provides attendees with a behind-the-scenes guided tour of water supply and treatment facilities and is open to anyone interested in water supply issues. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

November 9

November 9

Time: 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: 5156 McGrath Street, Ventura, CA

Sustainable Ag Expo

The Sustainable Ag Expo is a three-day event packed with informational seminars focused on farming research, resource issues and business trends related to sustainable agriculture. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

November 13-15

November 13

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Madonna Inn Expo Center, San Luis Obispo, CA

November 14

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Location: Madonna Inn Expo Center, San Luis Obispo, CA

November 15

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Location: Madonna Inn Expo Center, San Luis Obispo, CA

CAC Board Meeting

The Sustainable Ag Expo is a three-day event packed with informational seminars focused on farming research, resource issues and business trends related to sustainable agriculture. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

November 16

November 16

Time: TBD

Location: CAC Office, 12 Mauchly, STE L, Irvine, CA

Ventura County Water Tour November 9

The Ninth Annual Ventura County Water Tour will take place on November 9 from 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The tour provides attendees with a behind-the-scenes guided tour of water supply and treatment facilities and is open to anyone interested in water supply issues. Experts will share information concerning water reliability, safety, quality, quantity and cost.

The tour fee is \$30 per person. Space is limited and preference will be given to those individuals who have not previously attended. The tour begins with a continental breakfast at 5156 McGrath Street, Ventura, CA, 93003. Lunch is provided.

Advance registration is required and must be submitted by November 3. Interested parties can fill out the [online form](#) and email it to awa@awavc.com, or mail the form to AWA, 5156 McGrath St., Suite 104, Ventura, CA 93003.

All registrants must print out their registration confirmation and bring it with them in order to board the tour bus.

San Diego Farm and Nursery Expo

The San Diego Third Annual Farm and Nursery Expo will be held Wednesday, November 8 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Del Mar Fairgrounds located at 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, CA. 92014. The free event will host a diverse range of exhibitors, vendors and seminar speakers.

The following seminars will be held during the event:

- Eric Larson, Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau — Water: Supply Update and Runoff Regulations

- Craig Regelbrugge, Senior Vice President AmericanHort and National Co-chair of the Ag Coalition for Immigration Reform — Latest on the Politics of Immigration Reform in Washington, D.C.
- California Women for Agriculture Panel — Success Stories of Women in Agriculture
- New Crops in San Diego Panel — Growing Wine Grapes, Pitahaya, Coffee, Hops and Olives in San Diego
- James Bethke, UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor — The Pests You're Battling and the Ones on the Horizon

The California Avocado Commission will have a booth (#805) in the Resource Center of the Expo. A list of vendors and a map of the Expo can be found in the right-hand navigation.

Interested parties can register in advance for the event [online](#). For more information, visit the [Expo website](#).

ICE Plans to Increase Workplace Enforcement Actions, Update on Immigration Legislation

As reported recently (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/17/politics/ice-crackdown-workplaces/index.html>) the Acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Director Tom Homan announced that he has instructed Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the investigative unit of ICE, to increase work site enforcement “by four to five times.”

It's important as an employer that you are following all existing labor laws for all your employees and are aware of your legal responsibilities and rights as an employer. All employers, including those in agriculture, are required to have a properly completed Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-9>), for every employee. As an employer, you are prohibited, under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), from “knowingly” hiring or continuing to employ undocumented aliens.

During the last few years ICE actions primarily focused on Form I-9 audits. Employers should be prepared for increased worksite enforcement to include Form I-9 audits by ICE. If ICE is planning to conduct a Form I-9 audit, a Notice of Inspection will be sent to the employer. To be proactive, employers can conduct an internal audit on all Form I-9s to ensure the information is complete and accurate.

Employers may see costly penalties levied if an ICE audit identifies “minor paperwork mistakes” or “technical errors.” If, however, the employer waits to make corrections on Form I-9s until after receipt of a Notice of Inspection, the fines will likely be steeper — as much as \$1,100 for each “minor” technical violation. In addition, if an ICE Form I-9 audit results in a more substantive violation, such as an employer knowingly employing unauthorized workers, the fine can be up to \$16,000 and the employer could face criminal action.

During the last few months the administration's immigration actions have resulted in significant media coverage, and in some instances, reporters are seeking information on how these actions may impact agriculture. In at least one article a farmer was quoted as saying he is “knowingly employing an undocumented worker.” Although it seems obvious that this is intuitively not a good idea, to remove any uncertainty, this type of statement may be cause for ICE to conduct a Form I-9 audit or potentially a raid. We recommend that growers not respond to media inquiries on this issue, and instead direct inquiries to the California Avocado Commission.

Attached for your informational purposes is a comprehensive document prepared by the National Council of Agricultural Employers and AmericanHort that provides a very detailed overview of a Form I-9 audit; what would likely initiate an ICE raid and what to expect; employer rights; and much more.

Immigration Legislation Update

The House Judiciary Committee approved the Ag Guestworker Act (HR 4092) and the Legal Workforce Act (HR 3711) on October 26, 2017. Both pieces of legislation will now go to the full House for consideration and markups. Although the

current Ag Act does not do enough to provide for the agriculture workforce needs, there was overwhelming support from agriculture industry representatives to see the legislation move out of Committee with the hope major improvements can be made on the House floor.

The Ag Act would create an H2C program that appears to be more flexible than the H2A program in housing and transportation requirements. During the Committee markup process an amendment was passed that would require a “touchback” component. This would require the current workforce to leave the country before being able to apply for an H2C visa application. This is problematic as many of the current workforce have been in the U.S. for years and don’t have a place to “touchback.” Plus, would they be willing to run the risk of going back to their country on the hope they will be able to return to the U.S. under the H2C program?

The Legal Workforce Act would mandate E-Verify for utilization by all U.S. employers. Without a workable guest worker program, E-Verify would be devastating for agriculture.

The Commission continues to work with Western Growers Association, Farm Bureau, the Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform and the Agriculture Workforce Coalition to achieve agriculture’s objectives on the critical issue of immigration. We remain focused on finding a solution that works for agriculture’s employees and employers.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS ALERT IS PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY, AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS LEGAL ADVICE ON ANY SUBJECT MATTER. READERS ARE DIRECTED TO SEEK INDEPENDENT LEGAL COUNSEL WITH SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.

Crop Insurance Survey

The [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#) (NCAT) is seeking input from growers across the nation concerning crop insurance. NCAT is hosting an [online survey](#), which takes 20 – 30 minutes to complete, that will compile grower and rancher opinions, attitudes and concerns regarding crop insurance. The results will remain anonymous and will be used to shape crop insurance recommendations that NCAT, in partnership with a number of other agricultural organizations, will present to the United States Department of Agriculture concerning organic, diversified and specialty crop producers.

NCAT will pay those who complete the survey \$20.

Growers interested in participating in the anonymous crop insurance survey can do so by clicking on this [link](#).

Results of Ag Labor Survey Released

The California Farm Bureau Federation has released the findings from its [Agricultural Labor Availability Survey 2017 online](#). A total of 762 respondents participated in the survey, representing a broad spectrum of farm employers, including those who raise labor-intensive crops and those whose agricultural enterprises do not require significant employee involvement.

Highlights from the survey are as follows:

- Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents who employ a seasonal workforce noted they were experiencing employee shortages.
- Fifty-five percent of all respondents had experienced employee shortages and of those reporting shortages, 36 percent were tree fruit growers.
- Labor shortages were most acute for growers whose crops require the most intensive hand labor — tree fruits and grapes.

- Farmers noted they are increasingly trying to retain more of their workforce year-round to ensure they have employees for their peak harvest times.
- Those farmers who were able to hire employees noted that they had to rely on a less skilled workforce that took longer to complete the work. As a result, some farmers noted they chose not to harvest all or part of their crops.
- Fewer than 3 percent of the respondents utilized the existing H-2A agricultural immigration program.
- When asked what actions they have taken in response to employee shortages:
 - Forty-nine percent of respondents offered increased wages, benefits and additional incentives to prevent employees from accepting work with other growers or leaving agriculture altogether.
 - One-third said they used mechanization if available.
 - Twenty-nine percent attempted or investigated mechanization.
 - One-third elected not to engage in labor-intensive cultivation activities such as pruning and grapevine canopy management.
 - Approximately 9.5 percent planted fewer acres.
 - Nine percent did not harvest some of their crop.

Respondents noted that their employees had an increasing “sense of fear and anxiety” due to media reports relaying the “statements made and actions taken by policymakers in Washington, D.C.” Comments from respondents noted that workers were “very scared to move around,” “are afraid of immigration enforcement and deportations” and therefore heading “back to their countries.” Another grower noted a decrease in DACA student labor because many of those students are “leaving due to fear of being deported.” Other commentary noted that the agricultural workforce is aging; nearly 34 percent of respondents reported their employees were retiring or cutting back hours because of their age.

When asked how they planned to cope with employee shortages, short-term plans included offering higher wages/incentives (39 percent), planting less labor-intensive crops (16 percent) and planting fewer acres (10 percent). While many respondents (one-third) noted they were seeking to mechanize cultivation and harvesting processes, it is not currently a viable option for growers of more delicate specialty crops.

Based on the survey results, CFBF noted that the “federal government needs to move rapidly toward allowing a legal, immigrant workforce in the United States to guarantee that future immigrants who desire to work in American agriculture will be allowed entry.” In addition, CFBF “strongly opposes a mandatory E-Verify requirement on employers until a satisfactory immigration path for agriculture is realized.”

The results of the survey can be accessed [online](#), or by clicking on the document in the right-hand navigation.

2017-18 Avocado Release Dates

The California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) has announced the avocado release dates for the 2017/2018 season. The official announcement can be found [here](#). New for 2017/18 is incorporation of the release dates for the Gem variety. CDFA will publish Reed release dates as the season progresses.

For further information regarding avocado maturity release dates, visit the Maturity Release Date page on the [California avocado grower website](#), or contact AIP at 760.743.4712.

CAC Joins Nearly 100,000 California Avocado Fans at Carpinteria Festival

From October 6 – 8, more than 100,000 California avocado fans celebrated the locally grown fruit at the 31st Annual California Avocado Festival, known as AvoFest. The event is one of the largest free festivals in the state and featured 75 musical acts and huge vats of fresh California avocado guacamole made by Carpinteria High School cheerleaders. Attendees sampled a wide range of California avocado dishes at various stands during the three-day event, purchased avocado merchandise and visited the ag tent to learn about California avocado history.

California Avocado Commission (CAC) staff and an array of CAC Board Members — including Rick Shade, Art Bliss, Bryce Bannatyne, Robb Bertels, Jessica Hunter and Bradley Miles — worked in the CAC tent. Trish Shade, Emily Miles, handlers and local growers also volunteered their time. The volunteers provided attendees with California avocado bumper stickers, recipes, avocado cutters and nutrition information. They also answered questions posed by local and backyard avocado growers.

Attendees also shared California avocado branded photos with their friends on social media by using the Commission's Snapchat filter.



The California Avocado Commission tent, located at the entrance to AvoFest, was very popular with attendees. Board member Art Bliss volunteered to help.

California Market Trends

To view all market trend graphs, including “Weekly Volume Summary,” “Weekly Avocado Prices” and “U.S. Avocado Supply,” please visit: <http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/industry/market-statistics>.

California Avocado Commission Weekly Volume Summary (Pounds)

	Week Ending 10/31/2017	Season-to-Date (since 11/1/16)	2017 Year to Date
Hass	0	204,588,030	204,188,215
Lamb	0	7,243,066	7,243,066
Other (Greens)	0	1,541,528	1,403,823
California Total	0	213,372,623	212,835,104
Florida	31,513	39,820,273	31,828,113
Chile	1,440,298	87,249,293	71,793,047
Mexico	42,042,880	1,652,051,976	1,413,097,421
Peru	0	144,776,283	144,726,283
Other (Imports)	2,980,000	36,890,000	27,450,000
Import Total	46,463,178	1,920,967,551	1,657,066,750
USA Total	46,494,691	2,174,160,447	1,901,729,967
Source(s):	California = CAC (AMRIC), Chile = Comité de Paltas, Chile		
	Florida = Florida Avocado Admin Committee		
	Mexico = APEAM, Peru = ProHass		
	Other Imports = USDA AMS website		

California Avocado Society Weekly Newslines* Avocado Prices – October 24, 2017

	Organic #1 (Field Price Per Lb)	Conventional #1 (Field Price Per Lb)	Conventional #1 (Carton Price)
California Hass			
#32's			
36's			
40's			
48's	Insufficient Volume to Quote		
60's			
70's			
84's			
*To subscribe to the Weekly Newslines, please contact the California Avocado Society at (949) 940-8869 or www.CaliforniaAvocadoSociety.org .			

Weather: 30-Day Outlook For California's Coastal & Valley Areas

Summary- The wet (troughing) part of the MJO Cycle will dominate during Nov 3-12. Rains occur in N, central and S California during this period, and some locally heavy rains are possible. Support exists in the sea surface temperature anomaly (SSTA) field for a long wave trough in the east-central North Pacific 140-145W, and a trough around 120-105W (central and S California E through the southern Rockies), and in the east-central US. SST anomalies west of California, and between Baja California and Hawaii are expected to continue warm. This tends to support moisture for rains occurring into central and S California during this period.

The *El Niño* Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Pattern is giving mixed signals as we start into November. For N and central California there is support for W flow and a few frontal passages during Nov 3-4 and 8. Additional rains occur from the 11-13, 15-17th, and around 21st.

For S California, the pattern through Nov 24 will support alternation between cutoff lows with a few showers, an occasional rainy cold front, and still some offshore flow or Santa Ana wind. Significant rains for S California are more likely about Dec 3-8.

In the Near Term – Nov. 2-16... In the southern California avocado growing areas, from Santa Barbara County to San Diego County, during Nov 4-5th and again from the 6-7th, rains occur. The first system may emerge as only showers, with main rains occurring early on the 5th. The next rains occur from the 6-8th, and may develop more tropical characteristics, i.e. heavy upslope rainfall. More rains are currently suggested for the 11-13th. Drier and warmer conditions return from the 14-17th.

Summary – Nov. 17 – Dec. 8... In the southern California avocado growing areas, from San Luis Obispo south, our CFSDaily guidance suggests a possibly well-defined cold front with rains around the 21-22nd, followed by a dry break (possible Santa Ana) for the Thanksgiving holiday. This pattern is well-defined in today's CFSDaily, but consistency in a forecast of that specificity is unlikely. A more plausible forecast is that the last week of Nov, where it is more likely to be dry with mild or warm days, and frost risk on multiple nights in the valleys. Although more rains, possibly quite heavy with high snow levels, are suggested for N and central California in the first week of Dec, there is no indication how much rain may be able to reach into S California.

Seasonal Outlook / La Niña Update...December 9 – January 31, 2017... Latest solutions show some near or a little above normal rainfall in Dec in N and north-central California, but drier than normal in S California. Jan 2018 solutions are near or slightly drier than normal from both the NMME (ensemble) and CFSv2 forecast model solutions. For S California, there is some support for light showers then frosts occurring between Santa Ana events, with upper lows that develop over Arizona and SE California during several periods in mid to late Dec through most of Jan. Be ready for a lot of frosts on multiple days in a series.

...Alan Fox, Fox Weather LLC...